



ROAN PLATEAU RMP AMENDMENT EVALUATION OF PROPOSED AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

August 2002



Roan Plateau Plan Amendment

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

Report on the Application of the Relevance and Importance Criteria

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**Roan Plateau RMP Amendment
Evaluation of Proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
Relevance and Importance Report**

**Errata Sheet and Update
January 13, 2003**

p.6, “Geologic Analysis” – Remove – All references to the “Arch” under the geologic section for the Anvil Points ACEC.

p.7, “Fish/Wildlife Analysis” – Add – Under the *Values* section – The Anvil Points claystone cave supports a known population of “Townsend’s Big-eared bats (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), a BLM Sensitive species.

p.8, Second Paragraph, “Fish/Wildlife Analysis” – Change the first sentence to read” This area meets the relevance criteria for wildlife resources (BLM 1613.1.11.A(2) as it contains crucial habitat for peregrine falcons, golden eagles and Townsend’s Big-eared bats.

p. 17, First paragraph, Remove “A rare community of Mancos columbine and the BLM Sensitive plant, Eastwood’s monkeyflower, (*Mimulus eastwoodiae*) is also present in one of these hanging gardens.

P. 18 Second paragraph, “*Findings*”, Remove “BLM Sensitive” from the first sentence. Remove last sentence of 2nd paragraph, “The area also supports a population of the BLM Sensitive plant, Eastwood’s monkeyflower.”

p.17 Insert as paragraph 4, “The Indian ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides* / *Achnatherum hymenoides*) shale barrens community occurs on south-facing slopes composed of shale or mudstone soils, often capped with a thin layer of gravel (Reid, *et. al.*, 1994). These areas are sparsely vegetated. Indian ricegrass is the dominant species, with smaller amounts of other grasses, forbs, and scattered shrubs. This rare community is found on south-facing slopes of East Fork Parachute Creek, Northwater Creek, Trapper Creek, and Ben Good Creek. The community is ranked G2/S2 (CNHP, 1997).”

p. 20 Second paragraph, Replace “Within this proposed ACEC are several hanging gardens, the uncommon Western Slope sagebrush shrubland community and populations of the locally endemic Utah fescue” with “Within this proposed ACEC are several hanging gardens, the rare Indian ricegrass shale barrens community, the uncommon Western Slope sagebrush shrubland community and populations of the locally endemic Utah fescue.”

p. 20 Insert as paragraph 5, “The Indian ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides* / *Achnatherum hymenoides*) shale barrens community occurs on south-facing slopes composed of shale or mudstone soils, often capped with a thin layer of gravel (Reid, *et. al.*, 1994). These areas are sparsely vegetated. Indian ricegrass is the dominant species, with smaller amounts of other grasses, forbs, and scattered shrubs. This rare community is found on south-facing slopes of East Fork Parachute Creek, Northwater Creek, Trapper Creek, and Ben Good Creek. The community is ranked G2/S2 (CNHP, 1997).”

p. 27, Insert Reid, M.S., L.D. Engelking, and P.S. Bourgeron. 1994. Rare Plant Communities of the Conterminous United States: Western Region. In Grossman, D. H., K. L. Goodin, C.L. Reuss, eds. Rare Plant Communities of the Conterminous United States: An Initial Survey. The Nature Conservancy, Arlington, VA.

Glenwood Springs Field Office
Roan Plateau Resource Management Plan
*Evaluation of Proposed
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the land use planning process for the Roan Plateau RMP Amendment, a BLM interdisciplinary team reviewed the ten(10) recommended ACECs that had been nominated by BLM, the public and other agencies. The recommended ACECs were analyzed to determine if they contained values which met the relevance and importance criteria for designation. The areas shown on the attached maps indicate the “analysis units” for the identified values, and not necessarily the proposed ACEC size. The size and management prescriptions for each ACEC may vary by alternative to reflect a balance between the goals of the alternative and the values being protected (BLM 1613.2.22.B.1&2).

Four ACECs met the criteria: Anvil Points, Magpie Gulch, East Fork Parachute Creek, and Trapper/Northwater Creek. These four areas, which met the relevance and importance criteria, will be “identified as potential ACECs and will be fully considered for designation and management in the resource management plan amendment” (BLM 1613.2.21). For the areas found not to meet the relevance and importance criteria, “the management prescriptions which are eventually established in the plan for such areas shall reflect consideration of the identified values” (BLM 1613.2.21(D)).

II. PURPOSE AND NEED

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) policy in BLM 1613 Manual (USDI-BLM 1987; 1988) require the BLM to give priority to the designation and protection of ACECs during the land use planning process.

This analysis and the resultant findings for ACEC Relevance and Importance Criteria has been performed pursuant to FLPMA Sec. 202[43 U.S.C. 1712](c)(3), 43 C.F.R. 1610.7-2 and BLM 1613 Manual (USDI-BLM 1988). The analysis was completed by a BLM interdisciplinary team in order to evaluate potential ACECs in the Roan Plateau RMP Amendment Planning Area.

III. DEFINITIONS AND PROCESS

A. AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

ACECs are defined in FLPMA Sec. 103[43 U.S.C 1702](a) and in 43 C.F.R. 1601.0-5(a) as “areas within the public lands where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards”.

The ACEC designation is an administrative designation that is accomplished through the land use planning process. It is unique to BLM in that no other agency uses this form of designation.

The intent of Congress in mandating the designation of ACECs through FLPMA was to give priority to the designation and protection of areas containing unique and significant resource values.

BLM staff followed guidance set forth in BLM Manual 1613 for the process of identifying and evaluating potential ACECs. The process included three primary steps: 1) Compiling a list of areas recommended for ACEC designation, 2) Obtaining information on relevance and importance, and 3) Evaluating each resource or hazard to determine if it meets both the relevance and importance criteria.

ACECs may be nominated by BLM staff, other agencies, or members of the public at any time. In the early stages of the planning process, BLM staff reviewed information from BLM inventories, Colorado Natural Heritage Program records, and Colorado Division of Wildlife species-of-concern data to ensure that all potentially relevant and important values within the Planning Area were considered. Nominations presented by the Colorado Wilderness Network were also analyzed. The analysis area for the identified values encompassed all federal lands, which includes both federal surface and mineral estate. However, visual sensitivity data was not available and therefore, not mapped, for private surface/federal mineral estate (“split- estate”) lands.

BLM does not manage, and is not proposing to include, private surface or private mineral estate as part of an ACEC. However, BLM does manage federal mineral estate overlain by private surface. When making land use allocations and decisions relating to federal minerals as part of the planning process, BLM will consider resource values on these “split-estate” lands. Under various alternatives in the RMP, special management prescriptions may be applied to development of federal mineral estate to protect these values, outside of ACEC designation.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR DESIGNATION

To be designated as an ACEC, an area must meet the relevance and importance criteria listed in BLM 1613 Manual and require special management. The specific evaluation questions for each of these three elements are listed below.

1. Relevance Criteria

Does the area contain one or more of the following values?

- * A significant historic, cultural, or scenic value;
- * a fish or wildlife resource;
- * a natural process or system; or
- * a natural hazard?

2. Importance Criteria

Does the value, resource, system, process or hazard described above have substantial significance or value? Does it meet one or more of the following criteria?

- * Does it have more than locally significant qualities which give it special worth, consequence, meaning, distinctiveness, or cause for concern, especially compared to any similar resource;
- * Does it have qualities or circumstances that make it fragile, sensitive, rare, irreplaceable, exemplary, unique, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable to adverse change;
- * Has it been recognized as warranting protection in order to satisfy national priority concerns or to carry out the mandates of FLPMA;
- * Does it have qualities that warrant highlighting in order to satisfy public or management concerns about safety and public welfare;
- * Does it pose a significant threat to human life and safety or property?

3. Need for Special Management

Does the value, resource, system, process, or hazard require special management to protect (or appropriately manage) the relevant/important value(s)? Special management is defined as or is needed when:

- 1) Current management activities are not sufficient to protect a given relevant/important resource value and a change in management is needed that is not consistent with existing land use plan(s).
- 2) The needed management action is considered unusual or outside of the normal range of management practices typically used in the absence of the important and relevant values.
- 3) The change in management is difficult to implement without ACEC designation.

C. EVALUATION PROCESS

Table 1 summarizes the evaluation findings for the 10 areas that have been proposed for designation as ACECs. The 10 proposed ACECs are shown on Map 1. The following analysis describes in detail each proposed ACEC, the values assessed, and whether or not those values met the relevance and importance criteria. As a result of the analysis, four areas were determined to meet the criteria and are proposed for designation as ACECs: Anvil Points, Magpie Gulch, East Fork Parachute Creek and Trapper/Northwater Creek. Management prescriptions and boundaries for each proposed ACEC will be discussed in the ACEC Management-Prescriptions-by-Alternative Report.

TABLE 1. PROPOSED ACECS AND FINDINGS

ACEC	VALUES ASSESSED	RELEVANT/IMPORTANT
Anvil Points	Scenic, Geologic, Wildlife, Plants	Yes
Magpie Gulch	Scenic, Plants	Yes

East Fork Parachute Creek	Scenic, Fisheries, Plants	Yes
Trapper/Northwater Creek	Fisheries, Plants	Yes
Rifle Hogback	Plants	No
Ben Good Creek	Plants	No
Anvil Points Expansion	Plants	No
Parachute Creek (Cottonwood Gulch)	Plants	No
Schoolhouse Point	Plants	No
Thirty-Two Mile Gulch	Wildlife	No

IV. EVALUATION OF RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE CRITERIA FOR PROPOSED AREAS

A. ANVIL POINTS ACEC

Summary: This areas meets the relevance and importance criteria for scenic values, natural processes or systems and a rare geologic feature each of which have been determined to require special management attention. This area is recommended for designation as an ACEC.

Description of Area

The proposed Anvil Points ACEC includes 10,226 acres and is located along the south-eastern portion of the Roan Plateau, north of Rulison (See Map 2). The dominant feature in this proposed ACEC is the barren white cliffs along the southern rim of the Roan Plateau. The proposed ACEC also encompasses narrow grasslands and mesic aspen forests above the cliffs and



a series of ridges and ravines at the base of the cliffs. The elevations of the proposed ACEC range from 5277 feet to 9286 feet.

Included within the eastern portion of this proposed ACEC is an area of 5,192 acres that has been proposed as a Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. ScenicValues

Values

The Anvil Points ACEC includes the prominent Anvil Point which dominates the southern cliffs of the Roan Plateau. This area includes steep, dramatic shale cliffs giving way to deep gulches, rugged ridges and plateaus. The stark contrast of the vertical barren shale cliffs to the vegetated slopes below gives this area exceptional scenic quality. This dominant southeast facing slope of the Roan Plateau (as shown on Map 2) is a regionally significant landscape feature and is the scenic backdrop north of the I-70 corridor between the towns of Rifle and Parachute.



Throughout western Colorado, public sensitivity to landscape modifications is high on lands that have been determined to have scenic values. Scenic values are not only important to the local adjacent communities but regionally important to the visitors traveling through the area. Public scoping has fully supported protection of this irreplaceable significant viewshed. This landscape is extremely vulnerable to modifications, as they are easily discernible in the viewshed along one of the busiest Interstate highways in the Colorado.



A large portion of this ACEC has been identified as having high and moderate visual sensitivity. Lands with high visual sensitivity are those lands that have slopes over 30% and are within 5 miles of the Interstate. This ACEC qualifies to be managed under VRM Class I objectives which are to retain the existing characteristic landscape. See Appendix B for a complete description of VRM Class Objectives. The objective for VRM Class I

provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

Findings

Anvil Points ACEC contains significant scenic values which meet the relevance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.A(1)). The area also meets the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(1) & (3)) in that the area represents a significant visual feature in the landscape which is both locally and regionally important. In addition, the qualities and character of this scenic viewshed make it sensitive or vulnerable to adverse change, thus deserving special management.

2. Geologic Analysis

Values

The southwestern portion of the proposed Anvil Points ACEC contains a regionally significant arch and claystone cave that is reported to be one of the longest known caves of this type in the region. There may be more claystone caves discovered in the future, however at this time this cave's regional significance warrants special management for the protection and preservation of the resource. In addition the arch formed out of mudstone and sandstone in the Wasatch is unusual. The composition of the cave and the arch makes them extremely fragile and vulnerable to adverse change.

In addition the Anvil Points ACEC contains an alleged meteorite impact site known as "Yellow Slide". This has long been part of the town of Rifle's local history. The story of the meteorite has varied over the years and the legitimacy of where the meteorite landed has been in question. However, the 226 pound meteorite, known as the "Rifle Meteorite", is now on display at the Colorado Museum of Natural History. It has been confirmed to indeed be from Colorado and is the third largest iron body from the State.

The exact location where the meteorite was found has not yet been confirmed, and no scientific evidence at this time has supported the theory that the yellow-slide area is indeed the impact site.

While the yellow-slide area may not be an impact site, it is nonetheless a dominant feature in the southeastern portion of the unit. While not unique, as there are similar features west of yellow-slide, the oval shape and yellow color in this rockslide is unusual. Most rockslides below the Green River formation cliffs are usually predominantly gray in color and wide and straight sided, or narrow and linear. The theory is that the yellow color is due to a lightning strike or what is known as a paleo burn.



Findings

The Anvil Points ACEC meets the relevance criteria for rare geologic features (BLM 1613.1.11.A(3)) as it contains a significant arch and cave. The ACEC also meets the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)) as the arch and the cave are regionally significant and have qualities that make them unique and fragile, thus deserving special management attention.

While the Yellow slide area is an unusual and noticeable landscape feature and is the object of colorful local lore it does not meet the relevance and importance criteria. Additionally, while the meteorite itself is significant and thought to be from Yellow Slide Gulch, the meteorite impact site has not been located. While this history is important, no information is available to make a determination as to the historic importance beyond local folklore. Thus it does not meet the importance or relevance criteria.

3. Fish/Wildlife Analysis

Values

The Roan Cliffs contains important nesting habitat for peregrine falcons (*Falco peregrinus*), and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) (See Map 2). Both are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In addition, the golden eagle is protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. An active peregrine eyrie is located within the area and potential nesting habitat is located in a larger portion of the area. Although not confirmed, a suspected nesting pair may be located along the cliffs to the west of the existing pair. Several golden eagle nests are located on the cliffs both within and adjacent to the ACEC boundary. The BLM considers this to be an important raptor nesting area and the cliffs are identified as a Wildlife Seclusion Area in the 1999 Oil & Gas FSEIS. In addition, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program identified this area as a Conservation Area for its plant and raptor habitat values.



The area below the rim is important due to the diversity of vegetation types including oakbrush and mixed mountain shrub, pinyon-juniper, sagebrush benches, and limited riparian. These various habitat types provide essential food, cover, water, and security for many wildlife species resulting in the area having high biological richness and diversity. But most importantly, the unroaded nature of the area provides a seclusion/security component among various habitat types that is important to many wildlife species. This area provides transitional and winter range for big game and is one of the few areas where migration corridors exist from the top of the Roan Cliffs to the lower slopes.

The entire area has a southern aspect which is critical to mule deer during severe winters, as these areas are free from snow. The proximity of these open, southern slopes to higher density pinyon-juniper woodland habitats is also critical as a cover component. This mosaic of habitat types and their proximity to each other also provide important nesting areas for a variety of bird

species, and critical birthing habitats for many other wildlife species. The BLM considers this an important area as the core of this area is identified as a Wildlife Seclusion Area in the 1999 Oil & Gas FSEIS (See Map 2).

Findings

This area meets the relevance criteria for wildlife resources (BLM 1613.1.11.A(2)) as it contains crucial habitat for peregrine falcons and golden eagles. In addition, the lands below the rim contain unroaded, unfragmented habitats that are rare within the planning area. The unroaded nature of these lands provide solitude areas for a variety of wildlife species.

This area meets the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B.(1) & (2)) since the wildlife values have more than locally significant qualities. The high quality nesting habitat provided by the Roan Cliffs is regionally distinct and important for these protected bird species. In addition, the unroaded lands within the proposed ACEC are increasingly rare within the region and are highly vulnerable to adverse change.

4. Botanic/Ecological Analysis

Values

The combination of the large elevational range and the diverse geologic substrates has led to a wide variety of ecological zones and unique niches within the Anvil Points area. This proposed ACEC supports the following rare plants and significant plant communities and provides the habitat that sustains the ecosystem processes upon which these plants depend (Map 2):

Plants --

Parachute penstemon (*Penstemon debilis*, Candidate, G1/S1)

Debeque phacelia (*Phacelia scopulina* var. *submutica*, Candidate, G4T2/S2)

Southwest stickleaf (*Mentzelia argillosa* (*rhizomata*), Sensitive, G3/S2)

Debeque milkvetch (*Astragalus debequaeus*, Sensitive, G2/S2)

Utah fescue (*Festuca dasyclada*, Green River shale endemic, G3/S3)

Plant Communities --

Beardless bluebunch wheatgrass community (*Pseudoroegneria spicata inermis*, G2/S2)

Beardless bluebunch/Sandberg bluegrass community (*Pseudoroegneria spicata inermis*-

Poa secunda, G4/S1)

Quaking aspen/Rocky Mountain maple (*Populus tremuloides*-*Acer glabrum*, G1G2/S1S2)

Mountain big sagebrush/Basin wild rye (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vaseyana*-*Leymus cinereus*, G4/S2)

See Appendix A for a description of the species' and communities' rarity ranks.



Above the rim of the Plateau, the dominant features are the rolling grassland communities which occupy the ridgelines and south-facing slopes at the head of East Fork Parachute Creek and its eastern tributaries. The grasslands are dominated by beardless bluebunch wheatgrass and beardless bluebunch/Sandberg's bluegrass plant communities. The beardless bluebunch wheatgrass community is known from only a few places, specifically Mt Callahan, Cathedral Bluffs, and the Roan Plateau in Colorado. Baker (1983) believes high quality occurrences of this plant association are very hard to find, primarily due to heavy grazing pressures.

The Anvil Points site has a good example (B-rank) of this community type with generally light grazing pressure. Therefore, this area is particularly important and warrants special management protections to maintain the resource values.

The grassland ecosystems within this area have great potential as seed sources for collection and replanting in the Glenwood Springs Resource Area and throughout northwestern Colorado.

At the head of First and Second Anvil Creeks, the north-facing slopes consist of mesic aspen forests. Two stands of the globally rare aspen/Rocky Mountain maple community occur here. While neither of these two plants are individually uncommon, for them to form a community is rare. Each stand is approximately 40 acres in size. These appear to be climax aspen stands with good diversity and productivity of understory vegetation. This plant association has been documented from one drainage in the Sawatch Range of Colorado and from only a few other scattered locations in the mountains of Colorado (CNHP, 1997).



Immediately adjacent to the aspen/maple communities lies a unique sagebrush bottomland community. This mesic swale collects additional moisture and supports a lush community of Mountain big sagebrush and Basin wild rye. Within Colorado, this community is limited to the northwest corner of the state. This association requires fairly unusual conditions of moist, but

not saturated, deep soils along flat to gently sloping areas. It occurs only in a narrow elevation band from 7,500 to 8,800 feet (Johnston, 1987).



Along the rim and within the cliffs, barren slopes of Green River shale provide habitat for the Parachute penstemon, Southwest stickleaf, and other narrowly restricted oil shale plants. The penstemon and stickleaf are found only on the Green River Formation shale substrate. Of the five known populations of Parachute penstemon in the world, two occur in the Anvil Points area. This area also supports a large percentage of the world's populations of Southwest stickleaf.

Below the vertical cliffs of the Green River Formation, the landscape gives way to rugged ridges and deep ravines. The ridges and ravines belong to the Wasatch Formation, which is less resistant to erosion. The Wasatch Formation supports varying densities of Pinyon-juniper and also the rare Debeque phacelia and Debeque milkvetch.

Map 2 shows the occupied and potential habitat for these rare plants and plant communities. The Colorado Natural Heritage Program ranks the biodiversity of this site as "B2", having "very high significance". (see Appendix A for a complete description of CNHP's biodiversity ranking system).

Findings

This area meets the relevance criteria for botanical resources and natural processes or systems (1613.1.11.A(3)). The area contains 2 Candidate and 2 Sensitive plant species that are globally and regionally rare. The site holds a significant percentage of the world's population of Parachute penstemon and Southwest stickleaf. The site also protects three plant communities that have been identified as being rare or uncommon nationally and/or within the state. The area meets the importance criteria (1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)) because the values are regionally or nationally significant, are irreplaceable and are vulnerable to adverse change, thus deserving special management attention.

B. MAGPIE GULCH ACEC

Summary: This site meets the relevance and importance criteria for scenic values and a natural process or system which are determined to require special management attention. The area is recommended for designation as an ACEC.

Description of Area

The proposed ACEC is situated on the east and northeast-facing slopes below the Roan Plateau (Map 3). The elevation drops from 9200 ft at the cliff edge to 6500 ft in the canyons below. The boundaries of the 5,846 acre ACEC would be virtually the same as for the WSA. The western boundary of the unit follows the eastern cliff edge of the Roan Plateau. To the north and east, the boundary is defined by private property and a powerline ROW. The southern boundary is delineated by the JQS Road and private property. There is one 40-acre private inholding in the northern portion of the proposed ACEC. Vegetation on north-facing slopes is dominated by mature to old-growth Douglas-fir; south-facing slopes consist of mixed mountain shrub communities at the higher elevations and Pinyon-juniper at lower elevations. Benches and terraces along the lower slopes support sagebrush communities.

Also included within the boundaries of this proposed ACEC are 5,801 acres which have been proposed as a Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Scenic Analysis

Values

The Magpie Gulch ACEC includes steep, dramatic shale cliffs which give way to deep gulches and rugged ridges on the eastern most edge of the Roan Plateau. The stark contrast of the vertical barren white cliffs to the heavily vegetated slopes accentuates this units rugged character and exceptional scenic qualities. This ACEC contains prominent landscape features and outstanding scenic qualities that are visible from many key observation points. This unique



landscape is regionally significant as it provides a scenic backdrop to the communities of Rifle, Silt, and New Castle and to travelers along Interstate I-70 and State Highway 13. In western Colorado, public sensitivity to landscape modifications is high and public scoping has fully supported protection of this irreplaceable significant viewshed.

A large portion of this area contains lands that have moderate and high visual sensitivity. The area qualifies to be managed under VRM Class I, the objective of which is to retain the existing characteristic landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does

not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

Findings

Magpie Gulch contains significant scenic values which meet the relevance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.A(1)). The scenic values also meets the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)) as this easternmost portion of the Bookcliffs is not only locally important but also represents a significant visual feature in the landscape on a regional scale. The qualities and character of this scenic viewshed make it sensitive or vulnerable to adverse change. This value is irreplaceable and deserving of special management.

2. Botanic/Ecological Analysis

Values



This proposed ACEC supports several excellent examples of small, unfragmented old-growth Douglas-fir communities, which in turn support small populations (three breeding pairs in 1996) of three-toed woodpeckers. The old-growth Douglas-fir communities occur as numerous stringers and large patches (see Map 3), which together encompass approximately 1,500 acres along the north-facing slopes of this proposed ACEC. CNHP has ranked this as a B-3, “highly significant” area for its biological diversity. (See Appendix A for a description of CNHP’s biodiversity ranking). Historic wildfires have helped

create a healthy mosaic of dense and open areas important to the diverse wildlife of this area. Some small areas in the conifer forest have also been inflicted by beetle infestation, where the three-toed woodpeckers now thrive.

Findings

This area meets the relevance criteria for natural processes or systems (BLM 1613.1.11.A(3)) as it contains several small, but excellent, examples of intact old-growth Douglas-fir communities. The area meets the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)) because it represents a remnant community type within the region, thus it is an important site for protecting an example of this community type.

3. Wildlife Analysis

Values

The Magpie Gulch ACEC includes steep, dramatic shale cliffs which give way to deep gulches and rugged ridges on the eastern most edge of the Roan Plateau. This area has a wide diversity of vegetation types including stringers of Doug-fir, aspen, oakbrush, mixed mountain shrub, pinyon-juniper, sagebrush benches, and limited riparian. These various habitat types provide essential food, cover, water, and security for many wildlife species resulting in the area having

high biological richness and diversity. The steeper, northeast aspect areas supporting tall conifer, provide excellent raptor and cavity nesting bird habitat, and big game hiding and thermal cover. The unroaded nature of the area provides a seclusion/security component among various habitat types that is important to many species. This area provides summer, transitional, and winter range for big game and is one of the few areas where migration corridors exist from the top of the Roan Cliffs to the lower, steep slopes.



The southern aspects supporting shrub and pinyon-juniper communities, are critical to mule deer during severe winters, as they provide areas free from snow in which mule deer can forage. The proximity of these open, southern slopes to higher density brush and tree habitats is also critical as a cover component. This mosaic of habitat types and their proximity to each other also provide important nesting areas for a variety of bird species including turkey, blue grouse, and numerous migratory species, and critical birthing habitats for many other wildlife species.

Findings

Maggie Gulch contains significant wildlife habitat values which meet the relevance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.A(2)). The wildlife values also meet the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(2)). This area is important in maintaining species richness and diversity. The unroaded nature of the area provides security among an array of habitat types important to a diverse array of species and is irreplaceable and exemplary in nature. This area is vulnerable to adverse change which would cause habitat fragmentation and result in loss of species diversity. The area is recognized in the 1999 FSEIS as a Wildlife Seclusion Area for its outstanding wildlife values, and is deserving of continued special management consideration.

C. EAST FORK PARACHUTE CREEK ACEC

Summary: This area meets the relevance and importance criteria for scenic values, fisheries resources, and natural processes or systems which are determined to require special management attention. The area is recommended for designation as an ACEC.

Description of Area



East Fork Parachute Creek is a small but biologically significant tributary to the Colorado River. The headwaters for this creek begin at approximately 9000 feet in elevation with gently rolling hills of aspen forests, sagebrush and snowberry shrublands, and grasslands. East Fork Parachute Creek originates near the eastern rim of the Roan Plateau and flows westward, cutting through the Green River shale formation to form a deep canyon before plunging 200 feet into a narrow scenic box canyon. The resource values within the proposed ACEC are: a scenic 200-foot high waterfall and box canyon, Colorado River cutthroat trout habitat, a BLM Sensitive plant species, a Green River shale endemic plant, and four significant plant communities (See Map 4).

A Wilderness Character Inventory of this watershed found that 10,389 acres also met the criteria for a Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Scenic Analysis:

Values

Within the proposed East Fork Parachute Creek ACEC is an area with high scenic values. The area starts about midway down East Fork of Parachute Creek where a 200 ft waterfall drops into a dramatic box canyon running to the west. The viewshed consists of steep canyon walls with vertical relief of over 2,000 feet from the top of the canyon to the lowest reaches of the creek. Dramatic visual contrast is created by the narrow, incised canyon and the changes in form, line and color. The diversity and stark contrasts resulting from the steep barren cliffs falling off to spruce fir forests create a national park quality scenic attraction. Loss or impairment of this feature would be irreplaceable.



While this scenic segment of the study area is not one-of-a-kind, it is unusually rare, and is notably distinctive. There are few other canyons of this scale and setting with these similar features in the region, let alone nationally. Although a similar canyon and waterfall feature exists in East Middle Fork Parachute Creek, it is entirely on private land, has no public access and has no special protection provided.

East Fork Canyon was determined to be one of five high quality (Class A) scenic areas in the Glenwood Springs RMP in 1984. This portion of the ACEC qualifies to be managed under VRM Class I from the falls west into the box canyon in order to preserve the natural landscape. This class provides for natural ecological changes; however, it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

The remaining lands in the East Fork ACEC qualify under VRM Class II. The objective for this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape.

Findings

The East Fork of Parachute Creek meets the relevance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.A(1) because it contains significant scenic values. The area meets the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)) because the scenic values are irreplaceable and deserving of special management. The qualities and character of this scenic viewshed make it sensitive or vulnerable to adverse change.

2. Fish/Wildlife Analysis

Values

This area contains year round habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki pleuriticus*). This fish is a native trout species of the Colorado River Basin. The Colorado River cutthroat trout (CRCT) is designated as a special status species by the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. In addition, the CRCT is classified as a Sensitive species by Regions 2 and 4 of the USFS, and by the BLM in Colorado and Utah. Colorado River cutthroat trout were petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act on December 9, 1999.

East Fork Parachute Creek and JQS Gulch are two of five conservation populations located within the planning area, and are identified in the ***Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, in the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming***. These streams are given the highest priority for management and protection. A conservation population is defined as a reproducing and recruiting population of native cutthroat trout



that is managed to preserve the historical genome and/or unique genetic, ecological, and/or behavioral characteristics within specific population and within geographic units (CRCT Task Force 2001). In general, a conservation population is at least 90% genetically pure cutthroat trout (<10% introgression).



The BLM considers the entire watershed (See Map 4) in which these fish reside to be important to the long-term functionality of vital ecosystem processes which maintain upland and stream habitats important to these fishes. In addition, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) included the East Fork Parachute Creek Watershed in a Potential Conservation Area. CNHP ranked East Fork Parachute Creek as “B-2” site or “Very High Significance”. See Appendix A for a list and description of CNHP’s biodiversity ranking system.

Findings

This area meets the relevance criteria for wildlife resources (BLM 1613.1.11.A(2) & (3)), as it contains a genetically pure population of native, wild, naturally reproducing Colorado River cutthroat trout, that have been identified as a Conservation Population. In addition, the watershed in which these fish live supports vital ecosystem processes and maintains crucial habitats important for the long-term survival of this fish species. East Fork Parachute Creek and JQS Gulch both contain this BLM Sensitive species.

This area satisfies the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)) since these streams are regionally and nationally important producers of native, genetically pure, and naturally reproducing Colorado River cutthroat trout. The populations found within this area are designated as Conservation Populations in the ***Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, in the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming***. Conservation populations are important in the overall conservation of the species and are given the highest priority for management and protection. These populations are unique and irreplaceable.

3. Botanic/Ecological Analysis

Values

A unique wetland feature found in East Fork Parachute Creek and its tributaries is the hanging garden seeps which support the rare Hanging garden sullivania (*Sullivantia hapemanii*). Hanging garden seeps are limited to the walls of waterfalls or cliffs with seeps. These seeps are most abundant on north-facing slopes along East Fork Parachute and Northwater Creeks where the Green River shale beds are exposed within the canyon walls. The hydrologic flows combined with the Green River shale substrate creates a unique “hanging garden” environment which supports the Hanging garden sullivania. A rare community of Mancos columbine and the BLM Sensitive plant, Eastwood’s monkeyflower, (*Mimulus eastwoodiae*) is also present in one of these hanging gardens. The Hanging garden sullivania, a Colorado endemic plant, is narrowly restricted to calcareous seeps, but is found in abundance at these hanging gardens. Although the Hanging garden sullivania occurs in several locations other than the Roan Plateau, the Roan Plateau occurrences are more numerous and more extensive than anywhere else (CNHP, 1997) comprising nearly 62% of the total known occurrences.



As East Fork Parachute Creek begins to cut through the Green River Shale formation, approximately a mile above the waterfall, the canyon narrows and the riparian vegetation changes from willow-dominated communities to communities dominated by spruce-fir and narrowleaf cottonwoods. The Colorado blue spruce/red osier dogwood (*Picea pungens-Cornus sericea*) plant community is found in only a handful of riparian areas in Colorado. The community along East Fork Parachute Creek is in good condition.

Below the waterfall, the riparian vegetation changes to a more low-elevation type of boxelder, narrowleaf cottonwood, and red osier dogwood community (*Acer negundo-Populus angustifolia-Cornus sericea*). This community is considered rare on a global and statewide scale. East Fork Parachute contains an excellent example of this rare community type.

Utah fescue (*Festuca dasyclada*), a plant species restricted to the Green River shale formation is also found within this proposed ACEC.

Map 4 shows the occupied and potential habitat for the rare plants and plant communities within the East Fork Parachute watershed. Although the hydrology of the Roan Plateau is not well understood, the map also depicts the approximate drainage area for the hydrologic processes upon which these species and communities depend.

Findings

The East Fork Parachute Creek proposed ACEC meets the relevance criteria for natural processes or systems (BLM 1613.1.11.A(3)) as it contains a diversity of rare or uncommon riparian plant communities and BLM Sensitive plants. The area also meets the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)) as the rare plants and plant communities found in this drainage are of excellent condition and abundance and are vulnerable to adverse change. The Roan Plateau drainages support roughly 62% of the total number of Hanging garden sullivantia occurrences. The area also supports a population of the BLM Sensitive plant, Eastwood's monkeyflower.

D. TRAPPER/NORTHWATER CREEK ACEC

Summary: This site meets the relevance and importance criteria for fisheries resources and natural processes or systems which require special management attention to protect and preserve these important and relevant values. This area is recommended for designation as an ACEC.

Description of Area

Northwater Creek, Trapper Creek and East Middle Fork Parachute Creek flow roughly parallel to East Fork Parachute Creek. Northwater Creek and Trapper Creek are smaller tributaries which have their headwaters at the eastern edge of the Roan Plateau and flow four to five miles across the Plateau before merging to form East Middle Fork Parachute Creek. Map 5 displays the location of this proposed ACEC.

Both Trapper and Northwater Creek cut through the Green River shale formation, albeit more gradually than East Fork Parachute Creek, thus the upper reaches of these drainages have more gentle side slopes. The canyon walls become steeper and more abrupt just above their confluence. East Middle Fork Parachute Creek continues to cut deeper into the Green River shale before plunging over a waterfall approximately 1 mile west of the public land boundary. The riparian vegetation in these three drainages is not as diverse as that in the East Fork; however, East Middle Fork Parachute Creek and the lower segment of Northwater Creek also support hanging gardens.

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Fish/Wildlife Analysis

Values

This area contains year round habitat for Colorado River cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki pleuriticus*). This fish is a native trout species of the Colorado River Basin. The Colorado River cutthroat trout (CRCT) is designated as a special status species by the states of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. In addition, the CRCT is classified as a Sensitive species by Regions 2 and 4 of the USFS, and by the BLM in Colorado and Utah. Colorado River cutthroat trout were petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act on December 9, 1999.



Trapper, Northwater, and East Middle Fork Parachute Creek are three of five conservation populations located within the planning area, and are identified in the ***Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, in the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming***. These streams are given the highest priority for management and protection. A conservation population is defined as a reproducing and recruiting population of native cutthroat trout that is managed to preserve the historical genome and/or unique genetic, ecological, and/or behavioral characteristics within specific population



and within geographic units (CRCT Task Force 2001). In general, a conservation population is at least 90% genetically pure cutthroat trout (<10% introgression).

The BLM considers the entire watershed (See Map 5) in which these fish reside to be important for the long-term functionality of vital ecosystem processes which maintain the habitats important to these fishes. In addition, the Colorado Natural Heritage Program (CNHP) identified this area as a Conservation Area for both plant and fishery values.

Findings

This area meets the relevance criteria for fisheries resources (BLM 1613.1.11.A(2)), as it contains a genetically pure population of native, wild, naturally-reproducing Colorado River cutthroat trout, that have been identified as a Conservation Population. In addition, the watershed in which these fish live meets the relevance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.A(3)) because it supports vital ecosystem processes and maintains crucial habitats important for the long-term survival of CRCT. Trapper, Northwater, and East Middle Fork Parachute Creeks all contain populations of this BLM Sensitive Species.

This area meets the importance criteria (BLM 1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)). The populations found within this area are designated as Conservation Populations in the ***Conservation Agreement and Strategy for Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, in the States of Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming***. These populations are regionally and nationally important in the overall conservation of the species, and are given the highest priority for management and protection. These populations are unique, and irreplaceable.

2. Botanic/Ecological Analysis

Values

Within this proposed ACEC are several hanging gardens, the uncommon Western Slope sagebrush shrubland community and populations of the locally endemic Utah fescue.

East Middle Fork Parachute Creek and the lower portion of Northwater Creek have the cliff and seep environment which supports the rare Hanging garden sullivanii. These seeps are most abundant on the north-facing slopes along East Middle Fork Parachute and lower Northwater Creeks where the Green River shale beds are exposed within the canyon walls. The hydrologic flows combined with the Green River shale substrate creates a unique “hanging garden” environment which supports the Hanging garden sullivanii.

The Hanging garden sullivanii (*Sullivanii hapemanii*), a Colorado endemic plant, is narrowly restricted to calcareous seeps, but is found in abundance at these hanging gardens. Although the hanging garden sullivanii occurs in several locations other than the Roan Plateau, the Roan Plateau occurrences are more numerous and more extensive than anywhere else (CNHP, 1997) comprising nearly 62% of the total known occurrences. The area encompasses the hanging gardens and the ecosystem processes which support this rare plant (see Map 5).

The Western slope sagebrush shrubland (*Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *vaseyana*/*Festuca thurberi*, GU/S1S2)) plant association has only been described from the western slope of Colorado (Johnston 1987), although there is no apparent reason why this type could not be found in Utah and Wyoming as well. On the Roan Plateau, this plant association was located on private land along a Northwater Creek tributary. Thurber fescue is uncommon on the Roan Cliffs, therefore this is a very unusual site. It is possible that Thurber fescue was once a more common grass on the Plateau and that a century of grazing has favored sagebrush and smaller grasses over Thurber fescue.

Utah fescue (*Festuca dasyclada*), a plant species restricted to the Green River shale formation is also found within this proposed ACEC.

Findings

The Trapper/Northwater Creek ACEC meets the relevance criteria for natural processes or systems (BLM 1613.1.11.A(3)) because it contains the Colorado endemic plant, Hanging garden sullivanii (*Sullivanii hapemanii*), which is narrowly restricted to calcareous seeps, but is found in abundance in the hanging gardens on the Roan Plateau and the uncommon plant association, Mountain big sagebrush/Thurber fescue. The area also meets the importance criteria (BLM

1613.1.11.B(1) and (2)), since the Roan Plateau hanging garden occurrences comprise nearly 62% of the total known occurrences and are therefore of special consequence and vulnerable to adverse change. The sagebrush/fescue site is also important because it is the only site documented within the Roan Plateau Planning Area.

E. RIFLE HOGBACK ACEC

Summary: This area does not meet the relevance and importance criteria and has not been determined to require special management attention to protect the identified values. The area is not recommended for ACEC designation.

Description of Area

The Rifle Hogback Proposed ACEC consists of 156 acres of public land at the foot of the Grand Hogback 10 miles north of Rifle (Map 1). The ACEC encompasses steep slopes of pinyon-juniper, barren shale slopes and a small riparian area.

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Botanic/Ecological Values

Values

This ACEC was proposed for the protection of Wetherill milkvetch (*Astragalus wetherilli*). Wetherill milkvetch is known to occur immediately west of this parcel and one mile to the southeast. Although the Rifle Hogback parcel contains potential habitat for this species, no Wetherill milkvetch populations have been documented here.

Wetherill milkvetch was formerly listed as a BLM Sensitive species, but has been removed from the list. There are less than 46 documented occurrences, but the species is relatively widespread. It occurs in six counties in western Colorado and one county in Utah. The species is still considered “vulnerable”, a G3/S3, by CNHP.

Findings

This proposed ACEC does not meet the relevance criteria because it does not contain any known sensitive resource values. The proposed ACEC does not meet the importance criteria because although Wetherill milkvetch has the potential to occur there, it is not listed as a Special Status species and is not considered particularly fragile, rare, unique or vulnerable to adverse change.

F. BEN GOOD CREEK ACEC

Summary: This site does not meet the relevance and importance criteria. This area is not recommended for ACEC designation. Special management prescriptions have been

recommended for the area under several Alternatives. These prescriptions would provide some protection for the identified resource values.

Description of Area

The Ben Good Creek Proposed ACEC is an area of 633 acres which incorporates roughly two miles along the main Ben Good Creek drainage and its major side drainages (Map 1). The values identified in this proposed ACEC are the Southwest stickleaf (*Mentzelia argillosa*), Sun-loving meadowrue (*Thalictrum heliophilum*) and Utah fescue (*Festuca dasyclada*). This proposed ACEC represents the public land portion of a larger Potential Conservation Area (PCA) delineated by CNHP for the above-mentioned values (CNHP, 1997). The larger PCA encompasses all of Ben Good Creek from its headwaters to its junction with the East Fork of Parachute Creek below the falls.

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Botanic/Ecological Analysis

Values

Southwest stickleaf and the Sun-loving meadowrue occur on private land below the Ben Good falls. Neither of these plants have been found on public land along Ben Good Creek. Utah fescue is a Colorado oil shale endemic plant and a former BLM Sensitive species. Although narrowly restricted in range, it is known from 80 occurrences. Utah fescue has been documented from two occurrences on the public lands within this proposed ACEC.

These occurrences do not represent a substantial part of the total species' population, however, in several proposed alternatives, these occurrences would be afforded protection with a Controlled Surface Use stipulation. Utah fescue also occurs in the proposed East Fork Parachute Creek, Anvil Points and Trapper/Northwater Creek ACECs. In addition, a small occurrence of Utah fescue is already protected in the Deer Gulch ACEC designated in the White River Field Office RMP (Roberts, pers comm, 2002).

Findings

This proposed ACEC does not meet the relevance and importance criteria. There are no special status species or plant communities identified within this ACEC. The Colorado oil shale endemic Utah fescue does occur here, but the occurrences do not represent a substantial portion of the species' population.

Furthermore, special management attention is not needed for this proposed ACEC to protect the identified values. Utah fescue is already afforded some protection in a designated ACEC in the White River Resource Area. Other occurrences of the fescue are included in other proposed ACECs in the Roan Plateau RMP Amendment, lessening the significance of the two occurrences along Ben Good Creek. Lastly, reasonable protection of these two occurrences would be provided through the Standard Lease Terms and Conditions which would allow relocation of

surface disturbing activities up to 200 meters to mitigate for impacts to important resource values.

G. ANVIL POINTS EXPANSION

Summary: This site meets the relevance and importance criteria for natural processes or systems (1613.1.11.A(3) and 1613.1.11.B(1) & (2)) and some management stipulations are in place as a result of the 1999 FSEIS to afford protection for these values. However, the area was not recommended for ACEC designation since it has already been leased for oil and gas.

Description of Area

The Colorado Wilderness Network proposed an additional 4,300 acres as part of the Anvil Points ACEC (See Map 1). The additional acreage lies primarily to the southeast and southwest of the BLM proposed ACEC. These additional lands occur on the lower slopes of the foothills below the Roan Cliffs and consist primarily of the variegated soils of the Wasatch formation.

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Botanic/Ecological Analysis

Values

The identified values in the CWN proposed area are populations of Wetherill milkvetch (*Astragalus wetherillii*), Debeque milkvetch (*Astragalus debequaeus*), and Southwest stickleaf (*Mentzelia argillosa*).

Wetherill milkvetch was formerly listed as a BLM Sensitive species, but has been removed from the list. There are less than 46 documented occurrences, but the species is relatively widespread. It occurs in six counties in western Colorado and one county in Utah. The species is considered “vulnerable”, a G3/S3, by CNHP. The occurrences of Wetherill milkvetch in this proposed ACEC are immediately adjacent to gas facilities and in at least one case, half of a known occurrence was destroyed by the construction of a gas well pad.

The additional acreage recommended by CWN also includes several occurrences of the Debeque milkvetch and Southwest stickleaf. These occurrences are within an area already leased for natural gas. A Controlled Surface Use stipulation was attached to the leases to provide some protection for these plant populations.

Findings

This proposed ACEC meets the relevance criteria for Debeque milkvetch and Southwest stickleaf, which are both on the BLM Sensitive species list. The proposed ACEC does not meet the relevance criteria for Wetherill milkvetch because it is not listed as a Special Status species and is not considered particularly fragile, rare, unique or vulnerable to adverse change.

The portion of this unit where the Debeque milkvetch and Southwest stickleaf occurs was not recommended for inclusion in an ACEC because the area has already been leased for natural gas with a Controlled Surface Use stipulation. Once a lease has been issued, the terms of the lease may not be changed unless the lease expires. Since the area is already provided some protection and since additional protections would violate existing lease rights, the area would not be subject to any additional special management and ACEC designation is therefore not necessary to protect the values.

H. PARACHUTE CREEK (COTTONWOOD GULCH)

Summary: This site does not meet the criteria for relevant and important values. This area is not recommended for ACEC designation.

Description of Area

The Parachute Creek Proposed ACEC is an area of 7,178 acres which extends from Cottonwood Gulch to the southeast edge of Wheeler Gulch north of the town of Parachute (Map 1). The values identified in this proposed ACEC are Southwest stickleaf (*Mentzelia argillosa*), Utah fescue (*Festuca dasyclada*), and the Sun-loving meadowrue (*Thalictrum heliophilum*). This proposed ACEC represents a portion of a larger Potential Conservation Area (PCA) delineated by CNHP for the above-mentioned values (CNHP, 2001). The larger PCA encompasses all of Parachute Creek and the major tributaries downstream of the former Naval Oil Shale Reserve boundary. Approximately 90% of the larger PCA is on private land.

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Botanic/Ecological Analysis

Values

The three rare plants identified above have been found on the private land within the larger PCA but have not been documented on public land within this proposed ACEC.

Other resource values and hazards within this proposed ACEC include scenic cliffs, steep slopes and wildlife security areas. These values are already adequately protected by means of NSO stipulations in the 1999 Oil and Gas Development FSEIS. These protective stipulations will be carried forward in each alternative in the Roan Plateau RMP Amendment and therefore, no additional management protection is needed.

Findings

The values for which this ACEC was proposed are three rare plants. None of these plants have been documented to occur within the boundaries of the ACEC, consequently, this proposed ACEC does not meet the relevance criteria.

I. SCHOOLHOUSE POINT ACEC

Summary: This site does not meet the relevance and importance criteria. The area is protected from surface disturbance by an NSO stipulation in the 1999 Oil and Gas FSEIS. No additional management prescriptions are needed to protect the identified values. The area is not recommended for ACEC designation.

Description of Area

The proposed Schoolhouse Point ACEC is a 36-acre parcel of public land on the east side of the Parachute Creek drainage (Map 1). The parcel is on a steep talus slope with no public access. The resource values identified within this proposed ACEC are Utah fescue (*Festuca dasyclada*) and Southwest stickleaf (*Mentzelia argillosa*).

This proposed ACEC represents the public land portion of a larger Potential Conservation Area (PCA) delineated by CNHP for the above-mentioned values (CNHP, 2001). The larger PCA encompasses both public and private land in the vicinity of Schoolhouse Point.

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Botanic/Ecological Analysis

Values

The two rare plants identified above have been found on the private land within the larger PCA but have not been documented on public land within this proposed ACEC.

Due to the steepness of the slopes, the site is already afforded protection under the 1999 Oil and Gas Development FSEIS as an NSO for steep slopes. This protective stipulation will be carried forward through all alternatives in the Roan Plateau RMP Amendment.

Findings

This proposed ACEC does not meet the relevance criteria for natural systems or processes because the values for which this ACEC was proposed have not been documented as occurring within the ACEC.

J. THIRTY-TWO MILE GULCH ACEC

Summary: Part of this area is included in a site that meets the relevance and importance criteria has been recommended for ACEC designation (See Magpie Gulch Proposed ACEC). The

remainder of the area does not meet the relevance and importance criteria and is not recommended for ACEC designation.

Description of Area

This small area (approximately 215 acres) lies on the western edge of Hubbard Mesa north of the JQS Road (Map 1). Thirty-two Mile Gulch, an intermittent stream, flows through the site. Vegetation in the area consists of pinyon-juniper, rocky slopes, and a narrow strip of willows and rushes along the creek.

Relevance and Importance Criteria

1. Fish/Wildlife Analysis

Values

This proposed ACEC contains habitat for the BLM Sensitive Midget-faded rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis concolor*). This species has been documented as occurring within the planning area and potential habitat exists in a large portion of the planning area. The planning area represents the eastern fringe of the species range.

Findings

This area does not meet the relevance or importance criteria for wildlife resources, (BLM 1613.1.11(A) or (B)). Although this area contains habitat for midget faded rattlesnakes, so does a larger portion of the greater planning area. The western 2/3 of this proposed ACEC is already encompassed in another proposed ACEC - Magpie Gulch. Although the Magpie Gulch lands have been recognized as an area having relevant and important values and needing special protection/management, the remainder of the lands outside of the Magpie Gulch ACEC do not satisfy the criteria for relevance or importance.

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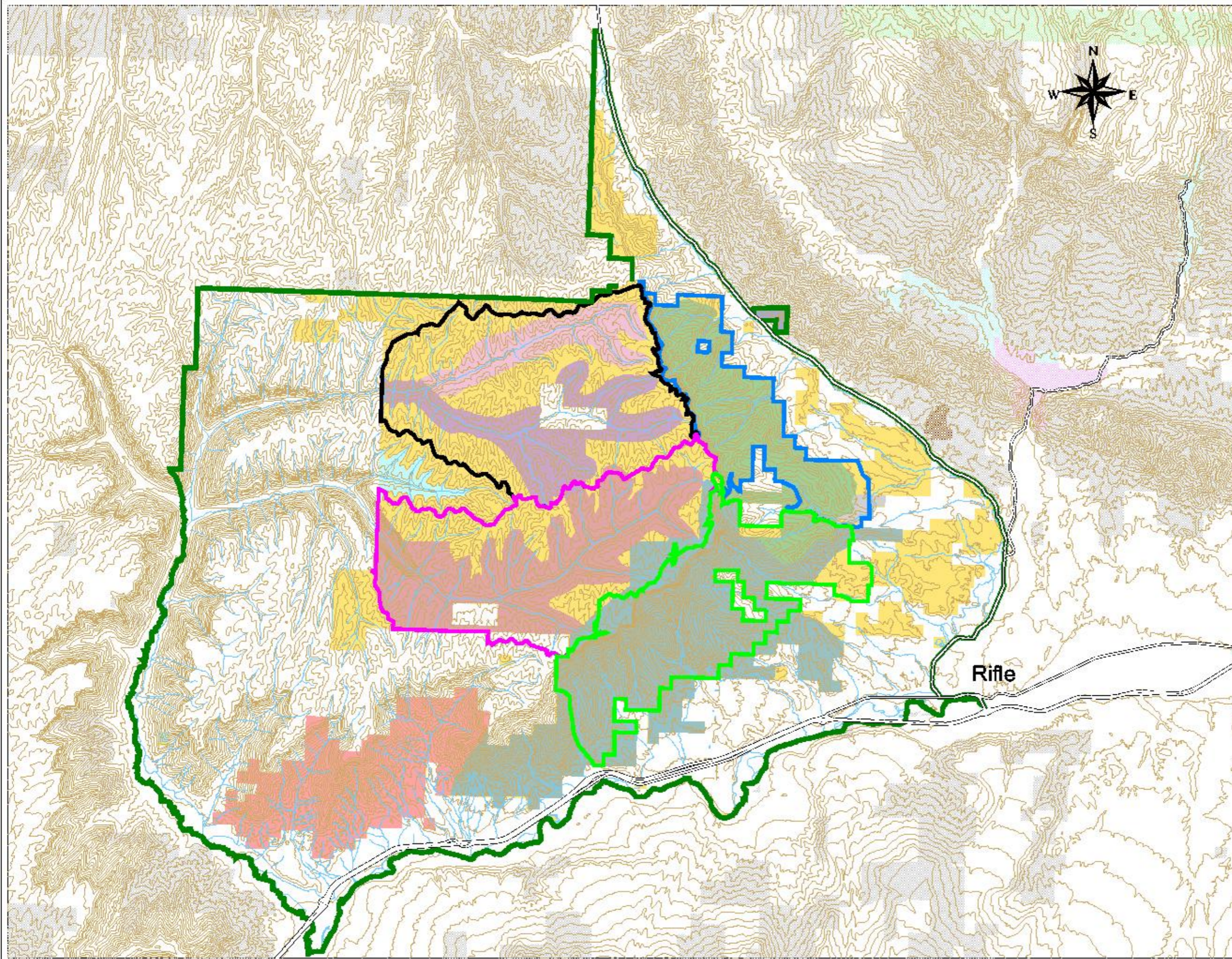
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**Proposed Areas of Critical
Environmental Concern
in the Roan Plateau
Planning Area**

- Highways
- Planning Area Boundary
- BLM ACEC Analysis Area
- Anvil Points
- East Fork
- Magpie Gulch
- Trapper Creek
- CWN Proposed ACEC**
- Thirty Two Mile Gulch
- Anvil Points
- Ben Good Creek
- Book Cliffs
- East Fork
- Northwater Creek
- Parachute Creek
- Rifle Hogback
- Schoolhouse Point
- Trapper Creek
- Land Status**
- BLM Inside The Planning Unit
- BLM Outside The Planning Unit
- BOR
- DOE
- FOR
- PRI
- STA

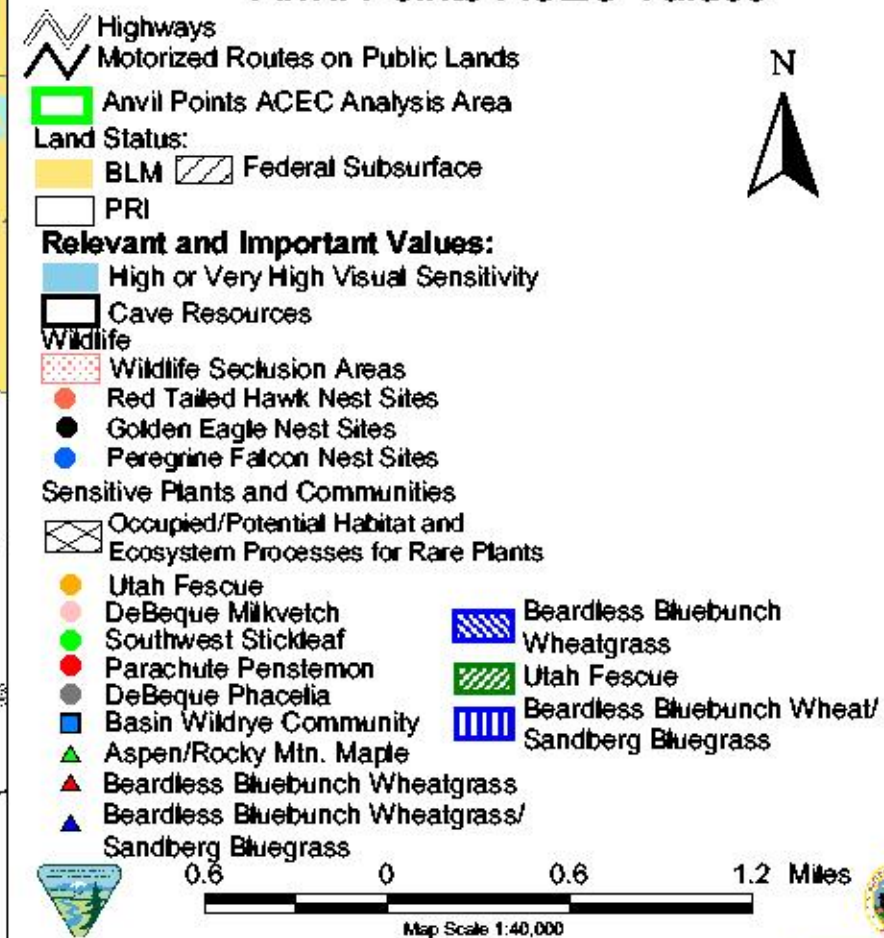
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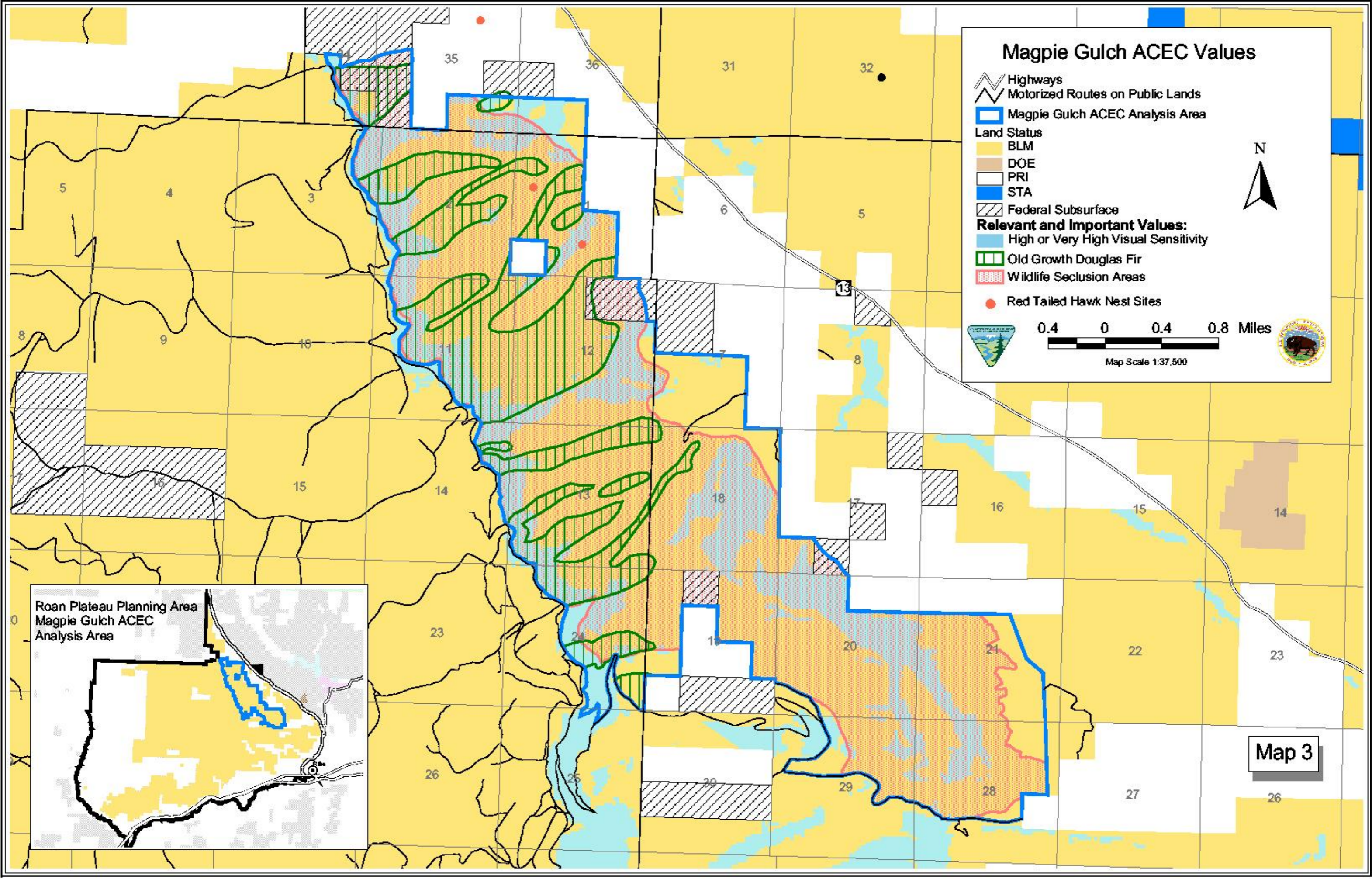
Contour interval 50 ft.

Map 2

Roan Plateau Planning Area
Anvil Points ACEC
Analysis Area

Anvil Points ACEC Values





Magpie Gulch ACEC Values

- Highways
- Motorized Routes on Public Lands
- Magpie Gulch ACEC Analysis Area
- Land Status
 - BLM
 - DOE
 - PRI
 - STA
- Federal Subsurface
- Relevant and Important Values:
 - High or Very High Visual Sensitivity
 - Old Growth Douglas Fir
 - Wildlife Seclusion Areas
- Red Tailed Hawk Nest Sites



0.4 0 0.4 0.8 Miles

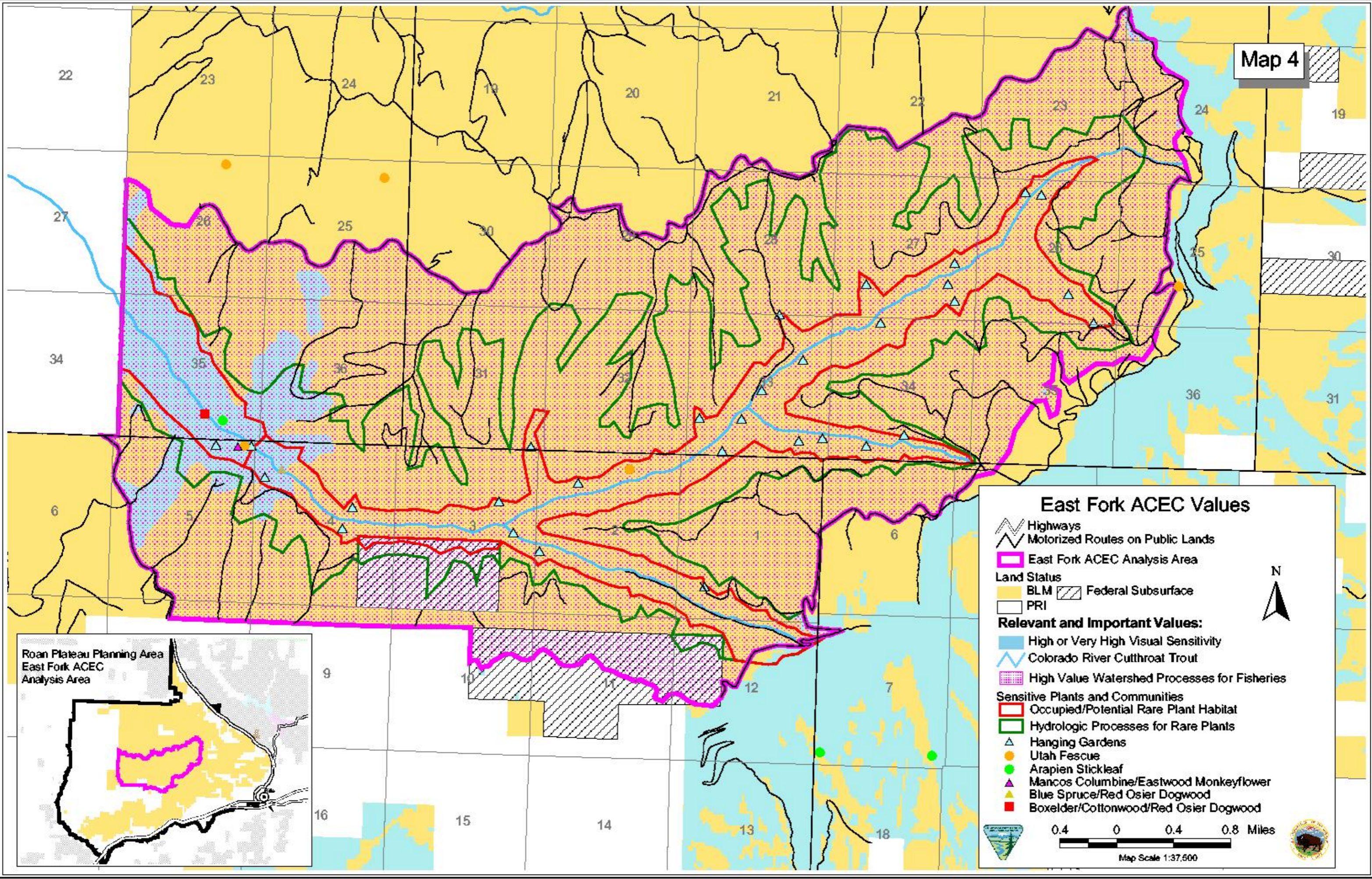
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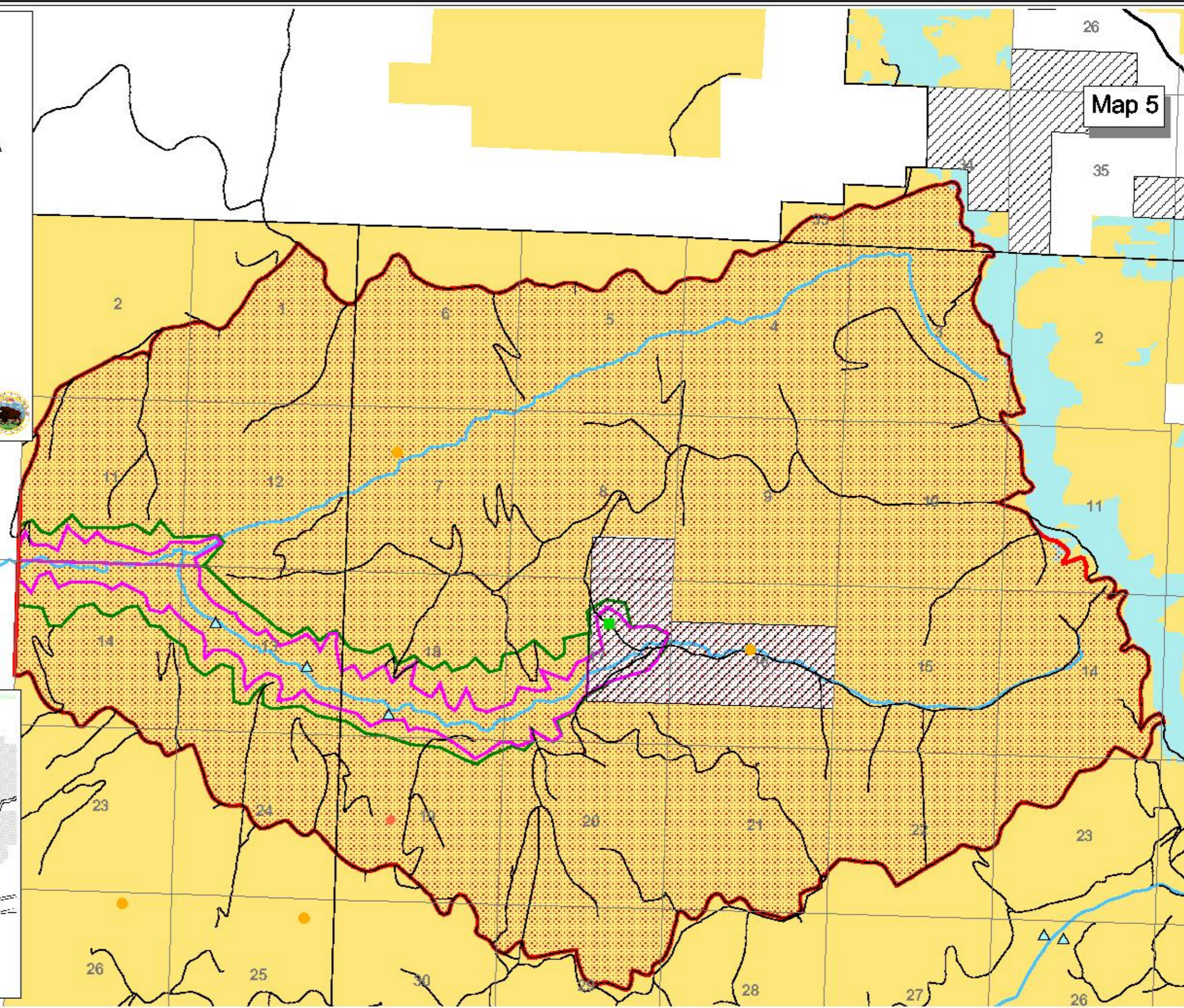
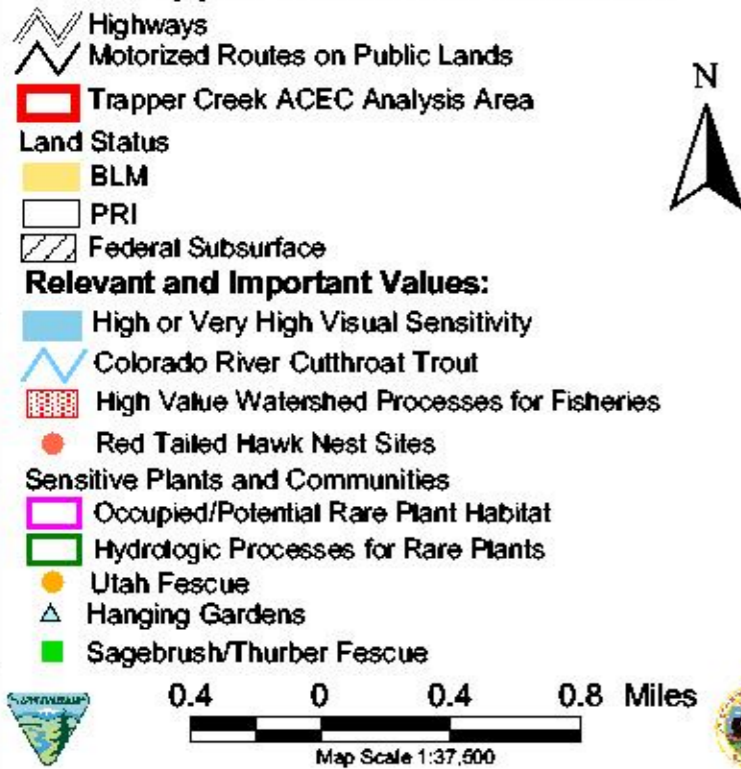
Roan Plateau Planning Area
Magpie Gulch ACEC
Analysis Area

Map 3

Map 4



Trapper Creek ACEC Values



Map 5

